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No.

Department of State,
Washington, July 30 1880.

Sir:

I have to state for your information that in pursuance of a Joint Resolution of Congress which was approved on the 14th. of May last, the President has determined to call an International Sanitary Conference to meet at Washington, and to invite to join in the proposed conference the several powers having jurisdiction of ports likely to be infected with yellow fever or cholera, with a view of securing the adoption by the powers in question of an international system of notification as to the actual sanitary condition of ports and places under the jurisdiction of such powers, and of vessels sailing therefrom.

I enclose herewith a memorandum in which the circumstances which have induced this Government to ask those of other nations to join in the proposed Inter-
national

-national Sanitary Conference, are set forth, and which concludes with a statement of the specific propositions which the President would desire to submit to the Conference.

In view of the urgent necessity which, according to the experience of this Government, exists for prompt action in reference to this matter, I have to instruct you to lose no time in calling the attention of the Government of
to this subject

by transmitting for its information a copy of the memorandum above mentioned, and by asking it at the same time to take into consideration the expediency of holding a Conference of the character proposed, and requesting it to communicate its views on the subject to this Government at as early a date as may be convenient.

You may add that it is thought by the President that such delegates as may be appointed by the several powers to attend the proposed

Conference

Conference should be authorized to conclude, if deemed expedient upon consultation, an International Convention, in relation to any proper subjects for international sanitary regulations to be proposed for the consideration of the governments interested.

In order that the proposed conference, if agreed to by the several foreign governments interested in the subject may be held at as early a period as practicable, the President deems it expedient to suggest the first day of January 1881, as a suitable date for the assembling of the conference in the city of Washington. In the event, however that the government of

should have occasion to prefer a different date for the meeting of the Conference, this government will be ready to reconsider the question with a view to an alteration in the date.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

Wm. E. Smith

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Department of State,
Washington, July 29, 1880.

Memorandum in relation to points
proposed to be submitted to an International
Sanitary conference

A Joint Resolution of the Senate
and House of Representatives of the United
States, approved May 14, 1880, authorized
the President "to call an international
"sanitary conference to meet at Washington,
"District of Columbia, to which the several
"powers having jurisdiction of ports likely
"to be infected with yellow fever or
"cholera shall be invited to send delegates,
"properly authorized, for the purpose of securing
"an international system of notification as
"to the actual sanitary condition of ports
"and places under the jurisdiction of
"such powers, and of vessels sailing
"therefrom."

This resolution has its origin in the
practical difficulties which have been encount-
-ered in the administration of the regulations
and

and rules recommended by sanitary experience and framed by the legislation of the country to the end of preventing the introduction and spread of yellow fever, cholera, and other contagious or infectious diseases in the territory of the United States. The extensive prevalence of yellow fever in certain parts of this country during the past two years, and the almost continual existence of the danger of the introduction of such contagious or infectious diseases as yellow fever and cholera, by vessels coming to this country from infected ports abroad, gave rise to such legislative measures, but the difficulty in their application has been chiefly owing to the fact that in certain - foreign ports where infectious or contagious diseases have existed, or were supposed to exist, the local authorities have shown some hesitation as to coöperating with the Consular and medical officers of the United States in carrying out regulations deemed essential by this government as a sanitary safeguard.

Moreover, in consequence of the vague and untrustworthy evidence obtainable

in some cases as to the sanitary condition of suspected foreign ports, vessels coming thence to the United States have, in some instances, as it has afterwards appeared, been subjected to unnecessary quarantine in the ports of this country. On the other hand, vessels from non-infected ports of the United States have been compelled to submit to like unnecessary and vexatious delays by the quarantine regulations of other countries, based upon imperfect knowledge of the sanitary condition of American ports.

The joint resolution of Congress, quoted above, contemplates only securing "an international system of notification as to the actual sanitary condition of ports and places," and does not touch on the broader and more intricate question of the preventive sanitary measures imposed in the ports of each country, in conformity with its own laws and in proportion to the danger of outward communication and internal spread of epidemic disease at the port of introduction. The government of the United States, recognizing the essentially

= sentially local character of quarantine requirements, and their adaptability to the sanitary conditions and risks in the districts where they are applied, would not seek to propose any international code of general quarantine laws, even did the system of state and federal governments in the United States favor bringing the sanitary precautions of the sea-board States from Texas to Maine, with all their varying conditions, under one governmental code.

But the President is of the opinion that the great inconveniences and losses which the commerce of the world has been, and is now, suffering from the delays and obstructions caused by unnecessary quarantines can, to a great extent, be relieved by the establishment, as contemplated by the Congressional Joint Resolution of May 14, 1880, of an international system of notification as to the actual sanitary condition of ports and places likely to be infected with communicable or epidemic diseases.

And,

And following the authorization of the resolution referred to, he has, therefore deemed it proper to submit to the governments of the Chief maritime powers the expediency of holding a conference at an early day, in this city, to consider the subject of a proper and applicable scheme of such international notification.

The specific propositions which the President would desire to submit to the proposed Conference would include the following:

A. The establishment of a reliable and satisfactory international system of notification as to the existence of contagious and infectious diseases, more especially cholera and yellow fever.

B. The establishment of a uniform and satisfactory system of Bills of Health, the statements in which shall be trustworthy as to the sanitary condition of the port of departure and as to the condition of the vessel at the time of sailing.

The discussion of these points would involve, among others, the following questions:

I.

Who should be the certifying officer or authority as to the sanitary condition of ports and places, and of vessels?

II.

How can the certifying authority obtain trustworthy information as to the actual sanitary condition of ports and places, and as to the presence of contagious and infectious diseases?

III.

When yellow fever or cholera exists at or in the vicinity of a port or place, what examination should be made of a vessel sailing therefrom to secure a trustworthy knowledge of her sanitary condition?

IV.

To what extent, and under what conditions, should a clean Bill of Health be considered as affording satisfactory evidence that the vessel is free from danger of conveying infectious disease?

V.

V.

In what way can trustworthy information be obtained from ports or places, in countries which have imperfect or unsafe quarantine and sanitary regulations, and which may be unwilling or unable to adhere to the proposed international system?

VI.

Whether a schedule of graduated penalties could be fixed, to be exacted from vessels for various offences arising under the proposed international system?

